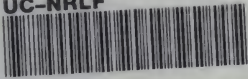


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POEMS



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POEMS

By
HERBERT KAUFMAN

POEMS

THE EFFICIENT AGE

DO SOMETHING ! BE SOMETHING !

THE CLOCK THAT HAD NO HANDS

TO BE PUBLISHED SHORTLY

NOBODIES

NEIGHBOURS

THE YELLOW STREAK

THE HALF-BALD LADY

POEMS

By Herbert Kaufman

NEW YORK

GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

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K21

1913

I DEDICATE
THIS BOOK
TO THE MEMORY OF
MY MOTHER
GERTRUDE RAFF KAUFMAN

795

*A number of
the poems in this volume are
included through the courtesy of the
publishers of The Cosmopolitan Magazine,
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they first appeared*

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POEMS

Why Are You Weeping, Sister?

WHY are you weeping, Sister?

Why are you sitting alone?

I am bent and gray

And I've lost the way.

All my to-morrows were yesterday.

I traded them off for a wanton's pay.

I bartered my graces for silks and laces

My heart I sold for a pot of gold —

Now I'm old.

Why did you do it, Sister?

Why did you sell your soul?

I was foolish and fair and my limbs were rare.

I longed for life's baubles and did not care.

When we know not the price to be paid, we dare.

I listened when Vanity lied to me

And I ate the fruit of The Bitter Tree —

Now I'm old.

Why are you lonely, Sister?

Where have your friends all gone?

[11]

WHY ARE YOU WEEPING?

Friends I have none, for I went the road
Where women must harvest what men have
sowed
And they never come back when the field is
mowed.
They gave the lee of the cup to me
But I was blinded and would not see —
Now I'm old.

Where are your lovers, Sister?
Where are your lovers now?
My lovers were many but all have run.
I betrayed and deceived them every one
And they lived to learn what I had done.
A poisoned draught from my lips they quaffed
And I who knew it was poisoned, laughed —
Now I'm old.

Will they not help you, Sister,
In the name of your common sin?
There is no debt, for my lovers bought.
They paid my price for the things I brought.
I made the terms so they owe me naught.
I have no hold, for 't was I who sold.
One offered his heart, but mine was cold —
Now I'm old.

WHY ARE YOU WEEPING?

Where is that lover, Sister?

He will come when he knows your need.

I broke his hope and I stained his pride.

I dragged him down in the undertide.

Alone and forsaken by me he died.

The blood that he shed is on my head,

For all the while I knew that he bled —

Now I'm old.

Is there no mercy, Sister,

For the wanton whose course is spent?

When a woman is lovely the world will fawn.

But not when her beauty and grace are gone,

When her face is seamed and her limbs are drawn.

I've had my day and I've had my play.

In my winter of loneliness I must pay —

Now I'm old.

What of the morrow, Sister?

How shall the morrow be?

I must feed to the end upon remorse.

I must falter alone in my self-made course.

I must stagger alone with my self-made cross.

For I bartered my graces for silks and laces,

My heart I sold for a pot of gold —

Now I'm old.

THE KINGDOM OF "IF"

The Kingdom of "If"

THERE'S a wonderful country, the kingdom of IF,
And it lies in the Valley of Dreams.
'Neath the bluest of skies where the sun never
dies,
It has gold for its oceans and streams.
There is never a storm and there's never a cloud,
And there's never a grief nor a woe,
And there's never a heart that in sorrow is bowed,
By the banks where the golden streams flow.

There each home is a castle of jasper and jade,
And each man is a king of his right,
And the dower of Priam's son jewels each maid.
There's no caste, nor distinction, nor station,
nor grade,
All who dwell there are equal in might.
Apollo has quickened her poets with song,
All her warriors brother with Mars,
And the fame of achievement's eternity-long,
Where the sun will not die for the stars.

THE KINGDOM OF "IF"

Still it's no place for me, and it's no place for you,
For it lies in the Valley of Dreams,
Where nothing is real and nothing is true,
And nothing is ancient and nothing is new,
And nothing is quite what it seems.

So we'd both best beware, lest we stray in the
path

That meanders to IF from our door,
For it's hard to resist when we bend 'neath the
load

Of life's burdens and feel them grow sore.
It's hard not to long for the castles of jade,
Not to long for the gold of her streams,
But it's harder to pay the full price to be paid,
When we have to come home from the journey
we've made,

When we have to come back from the anguishing
glade,

From the heart-breaking Valley of Dreams.

THE WAITING WOMAN

The Waiting Woman

A WOMAN is waiting for you, my lad —
Ride past!
Her cheeks are soft and her mouth is glad —
Ride fast!
For the flash of her glance is the light of bane,
And the touch of her lips is the key to pain,
And she calls to the wise man — all in vain!
But youth is strong and will find no wrong
In the lilting lure of her ancient song.
And the thing that's art, and the thing that's
heart,
Only the knowing can tell apart;
And the price of the knowledge is black with
stain,
And the seed of the wisdom, bad.

She would barter her love for your own, my
lad —
Ride past!
But your love is good and her love is bad —
Ride fast!

THE WAITING WOMAN

She offers the fruit of the bitter tree,
Her kiss is the promise of misery,
Of death and of woe; let her be! let her be!
Youth is bold and of eager mold,
And brass in the ken of youth is gold,
And the acid of grief is the only test
For the tawdry tinsel within her breast —
Which only the eyes of the wise can see —
And the eyes of the wise are sad!

THE SONG OF THE MANY

The Song of the Many

WE broke the yoke of the Aryan kings,
And we burst our bonds in Cathay;
We waged good war on the Mid-sea shore,
And we conquered the Carthaginian whore;
Babylon's walls to the ground we threw,
And the millions of Timur, the Tartar, we slew;
Istar and Isis we hurled to doom,
And we shrouded foul Nineveh's halls in gloom;
Rome broke her pact and we crumbled her fanes,
Forum and Pantheon rust in the rains;
Attila's curs to their kennels we drove,
And the skull of the ravaging Vandal we clove;
Down through the ages, from Egypt to Spain —
Pharaoh, the Slaver, and Louis, the Vain;
Lust-mad Belshazzar, and Cæsar, who dared —
None who laid hands on our birthright we
spared.

Man-god and beast-god and image of stone,
Idol of metal, of hot flesh and bone,
Menacing altar and menacing creed,
Hark to our purpose, and harking, take heed;

THE SONG OF THE MANY

None shall be proud with the pride of the
wrong;

No head shall lift with a crown in the throng;

None shall be lordly and thrive in his boast,

No king shall be, save the King Uttermost.

Brothers, eternal and well is our might,

Ours is the justice and good is the fight;

Wrought in the fire of souls is our steel,

Tempered in blood shed and bled for the Weal;

They who make shackles, make labor in vain;

We are the Many and wear not the Chain.

I HAVE PIPED

I Have Piped and Ye Did Not Dance

A MAN once lay at a woman's feet,
And all but his body slept;
And the woman called, but his ears were stone,
So the woman lived and loved alone;
With the blood of her vein and the blood of her
bone,
She plead to the man who lay mute and prone.

She cried for his passion to wake for her,
She called to his soul, but he did not stir;
So her days were sad and her nights were
mad,
For the want of this thing to make them glad,
For the miser'd wealth that the sleeper had.

But the man drowsed on and he felt no thrill,
And the woman loved on in vain until
The fires which once kept her heart a'leap,
Subsided and died in their bosom keep.

I HAVE PIPED

Then, the man who had basked in the pleasing
glow,

When he felt the fires of love burn low,
And his being was cold and he racked with chill,
Responded too late with his half-man will,
And the Morphean mists torn away from his
eyes,

He beheld her, and seeing, he sought to rise,
Then turning, he falls and he sobs and lies,
For this is the thing that he reads in her eyes;

“I have piped and ye did not dance;
And, lo! now my song is done!
I brought my all for your soul to grasp,
My soul was hungry to feel your clasp,
To quiver with joy in your mastering clutch,
But you let me starve when you had *so* much.
There was a day when the very touch
Of your hand on me was an ecstasy,
But you did not know and you would not see
That I was your chattel, utterly;
As the stars on high are the slaves of night,
So I glowed for you, but you saw no light;
What mattered it then that my form was cast
In the mold of a goddess from out the past —
That my mouth was a fragrant coral bed —

I HAVE PIPED

That the wine of my lips was sweet and red. —
That my bosom was eager to leap and thrill,
And answer your every passion's will!
Now, alack! all the song in me is still,
My soul is dead and it cannot wake;
You may stir the ashes and you may rake
The cold charred embers; there is no glow
In the place that was flame in the once ago."

THE SOUL OF SPRING

The Soul of Spring

THE winds blow,
And the snow
Shifts and drifts.
Winter lifts
His brutal hand
And smites the land
With woe.
A winding sheet
Of sleet
Wraps the ground.
Storms pound
The naked trees.
Branches snap.
The fertile lap
Of Mother Earth
Is all a'dearth.

Then Spring breaks the ring of ice.
In a trice
Her kiss unlocks the prisoned rill,
The sunbeam answers to her will,

THE SOUL OF SPRING

And warms the life-tide in the trunk,
Until with power over-drunk,
The urging, surging sap bursts free
In multi-tinted fantasy.

Along the softened turf
A surf
Of green first peeps,
Then leaps and sweeps.
The nuded plain
Is clothed with grain
And grass.

Then mass
The clouds, and like a pall
The drenching rains begin to fall,
And all the glint and tint
Are grayed.
The pastels fade.
The freshets pour.
The shore in vain
Seeks to contain
And guide the tide.

Far and wide
The rivers ride,
And then subside.

THE SOUL OF SPRING

And when at last
The floods have passed,
The slopes are radiant with coats
Of vernal plush.
And music floats
Full-melodied from feathered throats.
The orchard and the grove take hope.
On every twig the young leaves grope,
And virgin blossoms gently spread
And sigh and die.
Frail chrysales — they drop to death
Still pulsing with their first sweet breath.
But where the fragile promise lay
The nascent fruit seeks for the day.

Thus, bred in travail and accouched in tears,
Spring comes undaunted through the vale of years.
When Earth seems stricken and forlorn and dread,
The glorious head
Of Hope
Lifts through the drifts
And sings
Of fairer things.

So, too, struck low, we grope
Shattered and battered

THE SOUL OF SPRING

By our grief and strife
Until we grow to hate
The fate
That plots our life.
And then,
When we dread
No more
The door
That swings before the dead,
Comes Spring
To sing
The passing of our woe —
To bid us rise anew and grow.

THE LIVING DEAD

The Living Dead

BATTLES have you and I to fight and we
fight with the souls of men.

We rise and fall then we heed the call,

And we rise and fall again,

We fight for the right and the sake of the
fight,

And we fight at the bid of hate.

We stab with wit and we fend with grit,

But we play the game as the rules are writ,

With never a damn for Fate.

And we sometimes gain and we sometimes lose,
but it is n't upon the sleeve,

For we never show that we feel the blow,

And we smile while we hurt and grieve,

When our heart-chords strain and we writhe
with pain

And our souls are a livid moan,

We hold it in with a masking grin,

And the world can't tell that we did n't win,

And the world can't hear the groan.

THE LIVING DEAD

We buy at a price that the fool can't count and
the coward's afraid to pay,
And the most we gain is the blind, black pain,
But we keep right in the fray.
We can take the knife 'til it takes our life
And can live in the empty shell.
We are dead and gone but we battle on,
For only *we* trow of the place that's torn,
And only *we* know of the Hell.

HOPE

Hope

I HEARD the wails of grief and shame
When Priam's wall were wrapt in flame;
I stood within the Forum place,
When Vandal axe and Gothic mace
Battered the pride from Cæsar's face;
When Plague's foul legions filled the Seine
With corpses, and bestank the plain
Of France, from Paris to Lorraine;
When Flanders fell before the siege
That made the Spanish fiend her liege;
When Werewolves wrought a guillotine
For Louis and his fragile queen;
'T was I who staged anew the scene,
'T was I who wiped away the scars
And set the heaven with fresh stars.

GOLDEN LAND OF DREAMS

The Golden Land of Dreams

WHEN I'm lonely, dear, and weary,
And my soul is all a'dreary,
And the thought of you so far away is more
than I can bear;
When my aching heart throbs to me,
And the want of you sobs through me,
Then I wonder if you really know how very
much I care.

Do you think of me in sorrow,
As I wait a long to-morrow,
That must pass until you come again to kiss
away the pain,
For my hopes have wreathed around you,
Since the time my heart first found you,
And the days will all be cold and gray till
you come back again.

But at night when slumbers bind you,
I can speed my soul to find you,

GOLDEN LAND OF DREAMS

And we'll seek the Wonder-Islands where the
day-sun never gleams,
We will cross the fairy ocean,
And rekindle our devotion,
At the tryst of parted sweethearts in the
Golden Land of Dreams.

YOU

You

WHEN God was in His rarest skill
He tore from out the rose its heart
And of it wrought you, wonder one!
To be the triumph of His art.

He lit the stars to be your eyes,
Black, glooming night your tresses wove,
And Venus' self your graces planned
Then envied you your treasure-trove.

He raped the Seas of Ind for pearls
To jewel in your coral-bands.
He made your mouth an attar vale
Then sent you, flawless, from his hand.

AMBITION

Ambition

MINE is the shrine of the far-flung dare,
Mine are the priests who make no prayer,
Deaf am I to the poltroon's wail,
Smile when you win and smile when you fail,
Smile when you stagger beneath the flail,
Smile when the wolf gnaws on your soul,
For only the dauntless shall reach his goal.
Cynics and pulings and cowards I hate,
He who brings doubt calls in vain at my gate;
Fear you may never file into a key,
You must come eager and dogged to me.
Smile when your heart-chords strain,
Smile when you throb with pain;
Smile when all hope is vain.
Strong must my lovers be,
Straight backed and straight of knee,
Cuirassed in tempered will;
Fighting the fight until
Tendon and brain and thew,
Outworn, pulped, black and blue,
Lashed on, still strive anew.

AMBITION

I am Ambition. See
What men have done for me!
Out of the master-maw, brutal and bare and
raw,
Stick, stone and stream — no more —
That was the Earth before
I came to urge and teach.
I bade you rise and reach,
I called and fires flamed,
I called and beasts were tamed,
I called and swords were made,
I called and walls were laid;
Hear me and learn of fame,
Fear me and burn with shame,
Doubt me and flout me and pay the cost,
When Ambition deserts you then all is lost.
Rough are the roads that I bid you go,
Bitter and hard is my code, I know;
But ready am I to bestow full meed
Of honor on him who achieves. In deed
Alone is the proof of the sterner breed.
Gems in the womb of the earth I hide,
Gold in the clefts of the mountain side,
Glory with shadows and hunger I mask,
Nothing grant I to the weaklings who ask,
Nothing have I for the quitters who whine,

AMBITION

The cheat and the idler gain nothing of mine.
But for the chosen, the valorous few,
Who dream far and dare far and fare far and do,
Rising and falling and rising anew,
Stars from the brow of Night I rape,
Crowns for the heads of kings I shape.

THE GARDEN OF LOST ROSES

The Garden of Lost Roses

O H, beware, sister mine, of the gardens
Where the white roses bleed themselves
red,

And the winds are a'moan in the shadows
O'er the ashes of red roses dead.

There the dawn is a message of anguish,
And the merciful angels behold
The scarred and the shriveling petals
Of roses adrift from the fold.

And their tears gently fall through the stardust,
A sorrow-torn, pitiful dew,
On the lives that have lost all their fragrance,
On the dreams that can never come true.

MY PIPE

My Pipe

A FIG for your flagons of sour old wine,
Let others seek solace in beer;
I don't give a damn for the joys of the dram,
It brings me no comfort nor cheer.
I've no sorrows to drown,
I am free from care's frown,
My morrows with promise are ripe,
I don't want a thing, I'm as good as a king,
So long as I puff on my pipe.

Just give me my pipe and a well-laden pouch,
And leave me alone with myself;
I have more than enough while I sit here and
puff,
And forget about passions and pelf.
You may toast as you please to the ladies who
tease,
And fuddle your senses with wine,
But I know of no bliss that is equal to this,
I'm content with this old pipe of mine.

POMMES D'OR

Pommes d'Or

AT my door, a boy came knocking,
Crying loudly, "Apples mellow,
Apples sweet and golden yellow,"
In his eyes a laugh was mocking;
Love, I know thee,
Vain thy knocking.

For such fruit did Adam sin, sir;
Paris, in an evil hour,
Chose a prize from out thy bower;
Venus' glorious charms to dower;
Go, see their mark of beauty's thin, sir,
At their dead hearts I peep in, sir.

MIGNON

Mignon

MIGNONETTE, p'tite Mignon,
Give your lips to mine, ma chere,
Turn your eyes to mine, ma belle,
Sweetheart, read the tale they tell,
Life and soul have I to sell
For a kiss, my lady fair,
For a kiss, Mignon.

THE JUDGES

The Judges

WHO are you that dare to judge?
Are your own souls without smudge?
Are your lives so clean of sin
That your neighbor may look in?
Have you walked the narrow way
Where the ghosts of sorrow play?
Do you know the grief that sears
And the blindingness of tears?
Answer Him who sees the lie
Lurking in your smirking eye.

Was it you, my neighbor Smug?
Why, you money maddened thug,
They are waiting down in hell
Eagerly for you. They know full well
How you've housed the spawn of vice
Pitiful and loathsome lice,
Leasing them your barracks foul
For a use that made God scowl.

Was it you, my neighbor Sleek?
Peter has you listed "sneak."

THE JUDGES

Do you ever lie in bed
Thinking of the poor you've bled —
Of the widow's daughter's soul,
Spent to meet your mortgage toll —
Of men's honor all-agone
That you snared and kept in pawn?

Was it you, my neighbor Stout?
Why, you animal, you lout,
From your birth so low you've been
That you could n't stoop to sin.
All you do is drink and feed
Like swine and swine-like breed.
If your soul should ever wake
You would swear you had an ache.

Was it you, my neighbor Fair?
I'm surprised to see you there,
With the orange blossom scent
Still among your tresses blent.
Once she was as sure as you
That her love was staunch and true.
God knows what wild passion's play
Might make you throw all away.

.
Who are you that you shall say
What atonement *she* shall pay?

THE ACCOLADE

The Accolade

TWIST your frown to a smile, —
The game's still worth while!

It was no disgrace to have lost that last race.
Go back to the scratch again — right about face!
Get back to the match again — strike a new pace!
If you went down at sea with your flag flying
free.

If you stood at the mast unafraid to the last,
Don't you know that you won?
If you kept self respect when your fortune was
wrecked,

You still have a balance on life's books. Collect!
It's there to your credit. Go right out and get
it!

What if you've been leered at and jeered at and
sneered at?

It was better to fail than to justify jail,
Than to sell what no gentleman offers for sale.
It is n't a mark of esteem to be cheered at, —
So long as the world looks through glasses of
gold,

THE ACCOLADE

So long as the wolves are in charge of the fold,
So long as the craftsman's ideals are sold,
So long as the state and the bench have their
 price,
So long as the monitor partners with vice.
If your choice was honor, 't was not you who
 quailed —
You won the good Knight's accolade when you
 "failed."

FOOL'S GOLD

Fool's Gold

SEE him there, cold and gray,
Watch him as he tries to play;
No, he does n't know the way.
He began to learn too late.
She's a grim old hag, is Fate,
For she let him have his pile,
Smiling to herself the while,
Knowing what the cost would be,
When he'd found the Golden Key.
Had the money hunger bad,
Mad for money, piggish mad.
Did n't let a joy divert him,
Did n't let a sorrow hurt him,
Let his friends and kin desert him,
While he planned and plugged and worried.
Nothing stopped him as he scurried,
On his quest for gold and power.
Every single wakeful hour,
With a money thought he'd dower.
All the while as he grew older,
And grew bolder, he grew colder.

FOOL'S GOLD

And he thought that some day
He would take time to play,
But say —
He was wrong.
Life's a song.
In the spring
Youth can sing and can fling,
But joys wing,
When we're older,
Like birds when it's colder.
The roses were red as he went rushing by,
And cloud-woven tapestries hung in the
sky,
And the clover was waving
'Neath honey bees slaving.
A bird over there
Rondelayed a soft air.
But the man could n't spare
Time for gathering flowers,
Or resting in bowers,
Or gazing at skies
That gladdened the eyes.
So he kept on and swept on
Through mean, sordid years.
Now he's up to his ears
In the choicest of stocks.

FOOL'S GOLD

He owns endless blocks
Of houses and shops,
And the stream never stops
Pouring into his banks.
I suppose that he ranks
Pretty near to the top;
What I have won't sop
His ambition one tittle,
And yet with my little
I'm sure I'd not trade
With the bargain he made.
Just watch him to-day,
See him trying to play.
He's come back for spring skies,
But they're in a new guise.
Winter's here, all is gray.
The birds are away,
The meadows are brown,
The leaves lie aground,
And the gay brook that wound
With a swirling and whirling
Of waters is furling
Its bosom in ice.
And he has n't the price,
With all of his gold,
To buy what he sold;

FOOL'S GOLD

He knows now the cost
Of the Springtime he lost,
Of the flowers he tossed
From his way,
And say
He'd pay
Any price if the day
Could be made not so gray —
He can't play.

THE DRUMS OF GOD

The Drums of God

THE seed you sowed of death and hate
Are bearing fruit now at your gate.
The crimson dusk of ruin stains
Your mosques and minarets and fanes.
Your star grows dim, your crescent wanes
And Vengeance marches on your plains.
Your towers stand on cursed ground.
The Drums of God, Islam, resound,
And in their graves a martyred host
From Crete to the Dalmatian Coast
Awake and damn you from the tomb;
The babe stabbed in the mother's womb,
The virgin spoiled, the gray-beard slain
Defending hearth and seed in vain;
The spirits of the men you smote,
Armenian, Albanian, Croat,
The ghosts of Greece and Macedon
Will guide the ship and aim the gun
And guard the sleep and point the path
For them who come to do God's wrath.

FAILURE

Failure

IS this success, this bitter fruit
So full of worm and stain and scar?
I hark me to the years afar,
When from the skies I tore a star,
And in my soul I bade it root.
Now all the song in me is mute,
And all the hope in me is fled,
And all the faith in me is dead,
No more a house of dreams am I,
And ever out of reach, the sky.

ATLANTIS

Atlantis

OUT in the chill seas of yesterday,
Where the waters are aching and break
in tear spray,
And the beat of the waves that come crashing
in pain
Are the sob-throbs of anguish and souls gone
insane,
There's a dear little island — the Land of We
Two,
Calling to me, sweetheart, calling of you.

Back o'er the waters and through the tear
spray,
Saddened and gladdened I'm sailing away,
Back to the Land of You Must and You Can't,
Back to the game with its big rule of Shan't;
Dear little island and wonderful one,
Why in the world were you ever begun?

COURAGE

Courage

'T IS not because of muscled meat
We place men in the Master's Seat;
We do not reckon toughened thew,
Nor breed, nor creed, nor bulk, nor hue,
The force with which the anvil rings,
Nor care how hard the hammer swings;
The] might in brawn, the strength in
bone
Can never serve success, alone;
Think you 't was Spartan steel and skill
That saved Greece from the Persian will?
Think you Horatius won the day
And held the bridge through nimble play
Of sword? Or when all Europe lay
Cringing beneath Napoleon's sway,
'T was better guns and cannon balls
That swept the fields and crumbled walls?
All that was splendid in every age
Was written by valor on history's page.
Giants in pigmy guise,
Prophets with groping eyes;

COURAGE

What matter sight or size
When men build to the skies?
What matter numbers, years,
If we disdain our fears?

THIS IS YOUR HOUR

This Is Your Hour

THIS is your hour — creep upon it!
Summon your power, leap upon it!
Grasp it, clasp it, hold it tight!
Strike it, spike it, with full might!
If you take too long to ponder,
Opportunity may wander.
Yesterday's a bog of sorrow;
No man ever finds To-morrow.
Hesitation is a mire —
Climb out, climb up, climb on higher!
Fumble, stumble, risk a tumble,
Make a start, however humble!
Do your best, and do it now!
Pluck and grit will find out how.
Persevere, although you tire —
While a spark is left, there's fire.
Distrust doubt; doubt is a liar.
Even if all mankind jeer you,
You can force the world to cheer you.

THIS IS YOUR HOUR

L'Envoi

Quicksands underlie the pleasures;
'Neath the rocks are hid the treasures.

MEMORY

Memory

THE light
Of the white night —
The pale
Green veil
Of dawn
Is gone.
Gray day
Dulls the sky
And I lie
And yearn
And turn
The yellowed page of memory
And read to bleed.
Dear, all these years
My tears
Have stained the hidden chapter. It was well
To kill your love, but it is Hell
To face its ghost.
You were a lie as fair as ever slew a soul,
And yet if I might take my toll
Once more of kisses and caress

MEMORY

And press
Your God-hewn self again,
Perhaps the pain
Might still.

FIVE DOLLARS A WEEK

Five Dollars a Week

THUS is it down on Beelzebub's books;
"August the seventeenth — Isabel Brooks;
Home in the country; folks, decent but poor;
Character excellent; morals still pure;
Came to the city to-day and found work;
Wages five dollars; department-store clerk."

Wages five dollars! To last seven days!
Three for a miserable hall-room she pays;
Two nickels daily the subway receives;
One dollar-forty for eating, that leaves —
One-forty has such a long way to reach —
Twenty-one banquets at seven cents each!

There! Every penny of wage has been spent —
Squandered for feasting and riding and rent!
Spendthrift! She does n't remember life's ills.
How in the world will she pay doctor's bills?
What if she's furloughed (there's always a
chance);
Isabel ought to save up in advance.

FIVE DOLLARS A WEEK

Hold! We've not mentioned her clothes; she
must wear

Dresses, hats, shoes, stockings, ribbons for
hair —

How shall she get them? Suppose that we stop;
Perhaps it's as well if we let the thing drop.
You good math'maticians may figure it out;
(It's a matter of figures or *figure*, no doubt).

Carry this picture, it's better, I'm sure;
"Character excellent; morals still pure."

What else is written, we won't try to see;
Beelzebub thinks much the same way as we.

Why, as I live, there's a tear in his eye!
Now, what in Hell can make old Satan cry?

Surely the Devil is feeling his age;
Look what he's writing on Isabel's page:

"Virtue's a luxury hard to afford
When a girl hasn't money enough for her board."

THE DRONE

The Drone

GOD wrought you to produce the seed —
To be the mother-mate — to breed
Strong sons and daughters in your kind —
To dream far goals for them to find
Beyond the dim horizon's veil —
To bid their argosies make sail
Upon the Seas of Hope — you fail
Before your trust and quail
At thought of pain.
Your sacred heritage all vain!
A useless parasite, you drain
The cup of life and eat your bread,
Exulting in your sterile bed.
A queen-drone, snug and smug you thrive
As though you fairly served the hive!

LORELEI

Lorelei

YOUTH and I went out to sea;
Hope went with us, we were three.
Ne'er was such a company,
Ne'er was such an argosy, —
Cloth of Dreams, for sails had we.

From the Reef of Destiny
Called a voice to Youth and me
And to Hope — for we were three —
Voice of molten melody,
Singing love that may not be.

Youth in recklessness believed.
Hope, too eager, was deceived.

Youth lies stark upon the shore;
Hope is gone for evermore;
On the reef I cling, bereaved.

SONG OF THE SLATTERN

The Song of the Slattern

I SING me a song of the sloven,
Of the woman who has no pride,
Who does not care
If her raiment bear
A stain or a spot or a snag or a tear;
Nor blush to be caught in the morning glare
With run-down heel and with towsled hair —
With plenty of time but with none to spare
For little attentions to keep her fair
In the eyes of the man who found her rare
And wholesome ere
Her charm and her freshness died.

She twists her locks in a frowzy knot;
Her dressing gown bears a great grease clot,
The rip in the back of her sacque she's forgot;
There's a stain on her skirt and an ugly hole
In the heel of her stocking, and one in the
sole
Of both her slippers, that plainly show
The need of rejection at each worn toe.

SONG OF THE SLATTERN

There are empty shelves in her lone book-case;
She makes no effort to keep in pace,
As her husband steadily climbs to place,
Nor stirs herself to a single grace;
With never a fear 'gainst the time he'll find,
How slothful and narrow and dull's her mind;
No thought gives she to the subtle arts, .
That stoke the fires within men's hearts.

She stands stock-still while his world speeds on,
Till at last she is simply a pricking thorn
In his side. All the rose that she was is gone;
By her hands alone are his visions torn —
The softening veils that affection wrought,
To keep her the sweetheart and wife that he
sought, —
Herself she must thank that his dream is wrecked
For men lose love when they lose respect.

I sing me a song of the slattern,
Of the woman who sits alone,
Who had her day and who threw away
Her chances, when beauty and wit could play,
Who lazed and who lounged and who did not
stir

SONG OF THE SLATTERN

A finger to add to the charm of her,
Who would not of lotions and unguents and
myrrh —

The story's not new and anew 't will occur;
As she erred, so will many another fool err.

LA FELINE

La Feline

YOU have come back to me through the
ages —
Through the dumb, dead, blind years of ago;
And I saw you to-night in your glory
Of chiffon and lace and gem glow.
You are jeweled in man-madding beauty
As you were when the world was a-young,
When your passion-depted eyes
Shamed the stars of God's skies,
And your soul knew not what songs it sung.

You are married, they tell me, yet whisper
That many men preen in your trail;
Fools who sue with soft sobs for your pity
And sigh out their bloodless travail;
Or they sing empty nothings of passion
And weep in their puny despair
As they vow you are stone
Then implore you and groan —
Hunters caught in their own bungling snare.

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LA FELINE

And you play with them, one, then another,
Purr and stretch in your sinuous length,
As a she leopard sports with her quarry,
Knowing full well the might of your strength.
You are still as you were in the cave days,
When you lusted with bared souls to toy,
 And they pay just the same
 For the joy of your game
When you tire and find that they cloy.

You are fair now with lotion and rouge tint,
You are fragranced with essence and scent,
You are gowned in the last mode of Paris
And shapely in fashion's new bent;
You are plated with code and convention
And the fools judge you by your veneer,
 But beneath all your show
 There is in you the glow
Of the one thing that's stronger than fear.

You are still you — a radiant savage,
And your soul, drowsing numb, yearns its
 mate;
Not a weakling who comes with a love sigh,
Or a fool who despairs of his fate,

LA FELINE

But a master whose passion will wreck you,
Who will bruise you and tear you and take;
 Who will trample the code
 If it lie in his road,
And forswear hope of God for your sake!

THE UNSUNG HOUR

The Unsung Hour

YOU glorify him as a hero, and you crown him
with laurel and bay,
And of bronze do you set up a tablet, who has
vanquished his foe in hot fray;
And you chisel his features in marble, and high
do you lift him in fame,
But his deed of the mightiest courage, you pass
by and never do name.

For the foeman he met on the war-field was
never a peer to his might
And he fought him with weapon of temper, and
he faced him in God's wholesome light,
And the might of his tendons availed him, and
the shrill lust to kill was in air,
And he fought with a weaker against him, where
the world could behold and see fair.

But I know of a battle all dreadful, that he
waged with his soul against hell,

THE UNSUNG HOUR

In the blackness and dreariness of midnight.
And I crown him for this. I would tell
How a woman surpassing all women, delivered
herself to him, whole,
When his lust burned his veins into cinder, and
in passion, he spared her soul.

WOLF OF THE NIGHT

Wolf of the Night

WOLF of the night!
See her there
Slinking out from her lair
Dyed of hair.
With her eyes penciled black
As the woes on her back
And her cheeks painted red
As the sins on her head.
Oh, how dread!

Yon she goes.
Now she slows
And peers in a face
Hoping grace.
How God cried
When her soul died
In its pride
For a whim
Of some him
Who lied!
What a life!

WOLF OF THE NIGHT

Double-edged the knife
That smote when she fell,
Double-anguished the hell,
For who can tell
What mother
What brother
What other
Was wounded as well!

Who shall say
But sometime
He whose crime
Made her scarred
Shall be barred
In his path
And behold how man's wrath
Has worn her
And torn her —
This bold,
Old
Thing from the fold
Of them who pace in the morning
cold —
This soul that he sold
For a lie that he told —

WOLF OF THE NIGHT

This dim,
Grim
Love-mate of him, —
This price of a whim.

THE SLEEP OF MNEVIS

The Sleep of Mnevis

IT was Egypt when I loved you.
I was standing in the temple
'Neath the paws of Seonatis,
She the Stone One, with a woman's
Face upon a panther's body.

Now the sands of countless ages
Hide the shrine where I beheld you.

I was quick with life and visions
You were rarer than the lotus.
Night had woven you your tresses,
Isis' self had planned your bosom.
And your eyes were deep with passion
Deep and sloe and all a'smoulder.

I was sworn to her, the Stone One —
Priest was I — but you, a *woman*.

Then you came again and after
'Til they found us.

THE SLEEP OF MNEVIS

When I saw you
Here to-night, the past spake "EGYPT!"
I have wakened and I call you —
You were mine 'neath Seonatis
And we slept within her bosom, breast to breast,
The Sleep of Mnevis.

Come — I cry you back to Egypt!
'Tis the soul call and you heed it,
For your eyes are strange with mystery,
Trembling with the self that slumbered
Numb until Osiris judged me.

As at Gizeh, they will stone us.
They who loved us, most will hate us.
'Tis the LAW — the thread the weaklings
Spun to hold their weak together —
Fools! They think to bind this God-Thing
With their puny thongs and leashes!

CITY OF THE GILDED TEAR

The City of the Gilded Tear

BABYLON, O Babylon,
Shall thy day be never done?
Shall thy course be never run?

Shall thy towers never fall?
Must we ever heed the call
To the revel in thy hall?

For uncounted, awful years
Have thy gemmed and painted dears
Drunk the wine whose dreg is tears!

Soulless city of the night,
In thy false distorting light,
Right is wrong and wrong is right!

Vice be-rots the fruit you sell,
He who heeds the tales you tell,
Listening, finds the keys to Hell!

CITY OF THE GILDED TEAR

Thou wert old in Pharaoh's reign,
Old when Nero dealt in pain,
Old when Christ was born in vain!

Trojan Priam's walls are down;
Cæsar's Rome lies under ground;
But thy temples still abound!

Ever are thy spires near —
Shalt thou never learn to fear,
City of the Gilded Tear?

THE AWAKENING

The Awakening

I AM soul-sore and bended and weary,
And my being is ancient and gray;
The heart in my bosom is dreary,
And I long to be up and away.
I want to re-spend what I squandered,
I seek but one chance to repay;
For to-night my soul awakened and wandered
O'er the road to the gone yesterday.
Oh, the wrongs that can never be righted
And the wounds that can never be healed;
The darkness that could have been lighted;
The truths that too late were revealed;
The burdens so readily shifted
And the thorns that I should have withdrawn;
The anguish that might have been lifted
From a heart that was thoughtlessly torn;
The clean things my foolish feet muddied;
The innocent men I judged wrong;
The home that with sorrow I flooded;
The deaf ear I turned to life's song;
The struggler so easily aided;

THE AWAKENING

The wanton whom I might have checked;
The heartlessness that I paraded;
The dear ones I hurt with neglect;
The flower I robbed of its beauty
And tossed in a day to the slime;
The hour I faltered in duty;
The whim whose indulgence was crime:
Oh, God! though I face Thee repentant,
I ask not Thy mercy as yet;
I seek not to find Thee relentant
Until the To-morrow is met.
I thank Thee that Thou hast unshuttered
The blindness that darkened my soul.
My prayer to Thee now is not uttered
In hope to default conscience' toll.
I ask Thee to see me in sorrow
And grant me the prayer that I pray —
That *I* may make right on the morrow
The wrongs that *I* wrought yesterday.

HER PICTURE

Her Picture

PAINT me her picture, Master, thou who
know'st,

Limn as I bid thee, and make good thy boast.
Scatter yon pigments to the grimy floor,
For thou hast need of colorings as ne'er before
Have clung to brush or spread the canvas' face.
Call to thy mind the witching, winsome grace
Of new-born roses, creamy white, with touch
Of passioned crimson tinged, but not o'er much.
That, for her lucent skin, nor have the texture
base,

But soft as mists that o'er the Moon Queen
trace.

This is her face: more fair than that of her
Whose beauty moved great Homer's art to stir.
Less fair was Daphne whom a god pursued.
And yet betimes her glance betrays a mood
That lures men's souls as Egypt's wanton's own.
Again, like unto Mary's when first on Christ it
shone.

There, I've told thee well — but further hark.

HER PICTURE

Her eyes! Blue as the heaven's blue, dark as the
dark,

Flashing and dancing and soft and dreamy-
wise,

Lit with the fire that was in Circe's eyes,

Breathing the spirit of some Madonna old.

Make them as Dido's, yearning, pleading, bold!

Arch thin the brow, a curve as Heaven's own,

Beneath the lashes, breathe the breath of gloam.

The nose: not long nor short nor thin nor thick—

Who chiseled Milo's marbles knew the trick —

But tilt it just a bit and round the tip.

Join with thy deftest stroke, the pouting lip,

Full as a crooning babe child's, as it rests

Smiling and cuddling to its mother's breasts.

A mouth that parts one whit, to flash the
pearls

That eager wait to peep between its curls.

Like Cupid's bow the upper line then bend.

Set dimples, just a hint, at either end.

Her tresses! Tyro, dost thou really hope

By oil and brush with such a task to cope?

Find thee a loom, and hang thy distaff thick

With strands of gold, spun by the spider's
trick —

Mellow, a'sheen, brown, yellow, ruddy-red,

HER PICTURE

Shot here and there with many a tawny thread.
At such emprise, did Titian strive him well;
Though ages praise, I tell thee, Titian fell.
Do all I bid — thy task is but begun;
The picture, Master, never may be done.

Resurrection

I SAW her to-night as she passed in the crowd;
For a moment the past was forgot and I
bowed,
And the mummy that once was a heart, moaned
in pain,
And the soul that was dead writhed in anguish
again;
Then Memory spake and sank back in its
shroud.

MARY'S EYES

Mary's Eyes.

WHERE did Mary get her eyes?
Shall I tell you? From the skies.
Once a fairy princess skimming
Through the air when day was dimming,
Saw a flash of violet gleaming,
Like a sapphire, priceless, seeming.
Quick she flew,
And caught its hue,
In a sparkling cup of dew.
Then she made the eyes of you.

GOLD

Gold

IN a place where the glare of the maddened sun
tore
'Til the air fairly sobbed with the travail it
bore —
Where the red, blistered earth cried aloud in its
pain,
And with hot, cracking lips called to heaven in
vain —
Where the womb of creation was sterile and
dread
As a she-mummy lying a thousand years dead —
Where the wind never rustled the branches of
trees,
Nor blossoms blush red at the kiss of the
breeze —
Where no grass is, no shrub is, not even a
weed —
Where birds never carol and beasts never
breed —
Where the blind spawn of reptiles are gat but
to die,

GOLD

And no winged thing on carrion bent fouls the
sky —

A jabbering husk twenty million years old,
Battered

And tattered

And shattered and torn;

His eyes blind of sight and his reason spark gone;

As naked and filthy as when he was born;

Tumbled

And stumbled

And fumbled and fell

On a rock, where the sun with the humor of hell

Smote the raw, bleeding edge

Of a fabulous ledge

Of gold!

Gold!

Gold!

Gold!

Gold!

THE SAMURAI

The Samurai

SAMURAI, take thy blade!
Time was when hot it played,
Deep in some bloody glade,
Where clansmen battled;
Great Musamura, he
Wrought well the steel to be,
Worthy of such as ye,
Ere match-locks rattled.

Westward thine armies lead,
Westward where sons of greed,
Footsore and sore of steed,
Shaggy are standing;
Spawn of a Hell-gat land,
Brutal of brain and hand
Out on the Manchur strand,
Swift is their banding.

Nobles and freemen ye,
Lords of the Inland Sea,
Scions of victory,

THE SAMURAI

None ever thrall'd thee.
They who insult thy name
Once knew the bondman's shame,
Once felt the shackles maim;
Such never galled thee.

Strike 'til the Russ has fled!
Strike 'til the last is dead!
Strike 'til the seas are red!
Strike, it is Nippon calls!
Strike, ye are Nippon's walls!
Honor to him who falls!

SAN JUAN

San Juan

STUTTERING Gatling and sputtering
Mauser,
Rumble of field piece and grumble of shell;
On they come flying, boot-heels on their dying,
Yapping and scrapping and raising blue hell!

Shoulder to shoulder, up hillside they fumble.
One man is singing and one dropping dead.
One has gone daft with the joy of good killing.
One has a spurting hole plugged through his
head.

Idaho herder and clearing house runner,
Riff of the mining camps, doctors of law,
Strangers in motherhood, wrought into brother-
hood,
Brought back to cavemen and brutes in the
raw.

Rough of the cowlands you gambler, you
rustler,

SAN JUAN

Godless you are, but you kill like a prince!
Loafer of clubrooms, your soul code is putrid,
But damned if the bared teeth of death make
you wince!

Go to Wyoming or out to Nevada,
Ask in Missouri, and they 'll tell you how
When that whole hillside spewed bullets like
hailstones,
Laughing and chaffing the dudes led the row.

Up at Tuxedo, at Newport, at Larchmont,
Round about Hempstead, you 'll find chaps
who say
That a man does n't need to know pink teas or
germans
To set out for hell in a gentleman's way.

THE STAINLESS BANNER

The Stainless Banner

DOWN from the highlands and off the far
islands,
Out of Armenia, Finland and Spain,
Celt and Ionian, Semite, Slavonian
Come to commingle their blood with our strain.
Why, when the Old World begs,
Why should we take her dregs?
Why give them welcome to heart and to vein?

Spawn of the peasant — uncouth and unpleasant
Son of the pauper and child of the thief;
Bred through the ages of dwellers in cages,
Starvéd of all but starvation and grief —
Why do they grope to us?
Do they bear hope to us?
What would they write us on History's leaf?

Here be a haven, but not for the craven.
Welcome each Builder by brain or by hand.
Thus were the sires who lighted our fires —
God found them worthy and gave them the land.

THE STAINLESS BANNER

Far shall we fare with them,
All shall we share with them,
But for our cause must they steadfastly stand.

Brothers, remember to nurture the ember,
Let not the glory of Lexington fade.
Sound on the clarion, honor to Marion
(He who fought starving in morass and glade),
Perry and Scott and Boone,
And what the Texan moon
Saw when the Alamo's score had been paid.

Theirs were the sorrows, and ours are the
 morrows;
Into our hands have they given in trust
Stainless the banners that heard their hosannas—
Flag that no heel ever trod in the dust.
They who would share its folds
Gladly must bear its folds,
This is the price they shall pay for their crust.

THE DRUNKARD

The Drunkard

FLABBY faced and sodden eyed;
Lips on which foul curses ride;
Leering, sneering, gulping, fearing
Blindly what he cannot see —
God, why must such horrors be?
Cruel thoughts that lurk and hide:
Lusts that wait their time and bide
In his brain until his strength
Fades and gives them chance at length:
Smirching clean things with the mud
Ambuscaded in his blood:
All the best of him in thrall
Impotent to heed the call
Of his self-respect: his pride
Groping blindly for a guide:
Numb and dumb the soul of him:
Rank and dank the whole of him:
Laughter guzzling in his throat
Hear the brutal Bacchic note!
Now we know him, he's unmasked.
Once in Delphos as he basked

THE DRUNKARD

Putrid 'neath the Grecian sun,
When the orgies' course was run:
Lying, naked, shameless, vile
To the passer-by the while:
Goat-legs, mangy, smeared with muck:
Lifeless as fat swine stuck
By the butcher in his sty:
From a clean, green hill, near by
We gazed on him, you and I.

THE BRAGGART

The Braggart

SAID the redwood tree,
“What is time to me?
I was old when the bronze man came.
And the mammoth’s hide
Scraped against my side
And I heard the mastodon trumpet his pride.
And one by one at my feet they died.
Ten thousand years in my heart I hide.”
But the beetle smiled,
As she bored and filed
And she laid her egg and she hatched her child.
And she said to her grub
“Oh, my patient cub
I shall die at dawn —
But the work goes on.
By the worm and the slug
And the hungry bug
Bite by bite
Mite by mite
Shall his death be dug.”

KITTY OF KILLARNEY

Kitty of Killarney

AT the Lakes of Killarney
Lived sweet Kitty Carney.
It may be she's still living there.
Oh, Kitty was witty,
And Kitty was pretty.
She drove the gossoons to despair.
'They came by paradin,'
'They came serenadin,'
But divil a vow would she take.
She kept them all flurried,
But she never worried,
Did Kitty who lived at the Lake.

It was "Kitty come rowin'
And let me be showin'
How much I adore you, colleen.
My heart 's all for you, dear
I'll ever be true, dear
So long as the shamrock grows green.
There's no girl in Killarney
Like you, Kitty Carney;

KITTY OF KILLARNEY

I would n't be givin' the likes o' you blarney.
Don't tarry, but marry
Your own lovin' Larry.
Achushla, why are you so mean?"

AMERICA

America

A HUNDRED Tsars shall rot to bone,
A hundred kingdoms shall decline,
A hundred battlefields shall suck
Their glut of sacrificial wine;

The Buddhist priest shall meditate
Where now cathedral crosses gleam;
The sons of Ghengis Khan shall bring
To pass fulfillment of his dream;

The shrill muezzin's chant shall chime
At eventide with Ben Bow's bells;
The kaffir's clucking voice be heard
Where Godlessly now Paris dwells;

The lout shall loll in lordly state;
The beggar's child shall shower dole,
Before your final word is writ
Of honor, on the age's scroll.

AMERICA

Your wish shall will the world to peace,
The weaklings of the earth shall crawl
To suckle at your fruitful breasts,
And, fruitful, you shall feed them all.

